

A
Call to Humiliation
For the Grievous SIN
OF
Persecution,

In Two Sermons, Preached at the
Publick Fasts in *Lemster*, in the County
of *Hereford*, Wednesday May 21. and
June 18. 1690.

By *William Woodward* Minister of the Gospel.

Gal. 4. 16. *Am I therefore become your Enemy, because
I tell you the Truth?*

L O N D O N,

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Call to Examination

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T O

Edward Littleton Esq;

S I R,

WHEN we were called upon by Authority to National Fasting and Humiliation, I thought it my Duty to look into the Prayers of the Church, expecting to find a Full and Humble Confession of all the Piacula, and Great Provocations of the Land, and in that Black Catalogue the Grievous Sin of Persecution, the rather because one of our Prelates, who is thought to have Assisted in Composing those Forms, had told us in a Preface Published some years since, "That it may be reasonably apprehended, that it may have contributed not a little to fill up the Measures of the Sins of a Church, and to bring down severe strokes ——— again, they who had let themselves loose to all the Rages of a Mad Prosecution of some Poor Undiscreet and Deluded People ——— ought seriously to Profess their Repentance of this Fury in Instances, that may be as Visible and Edifying, as their Rage has been Publick and Destructive."

But that Bloody Sin, I perceived upon search, had escaped the Notice of our Ecclesiastical Guides, so that all our Fines, Flights, Imprisonments, and Cruel Usage from our Fathers and Brethren for almost Thirty Years, was to go for nothing; whereupon I Resolved to call over some of our Laws, which had been Drawn up against the Nonconformists and Protestant Dissenters, that I might be able to give better satisfaction to my self, and to those also that sit under my Ministry, that though the Lord be Just and Righteous in all the sorrow we have known, yet Man was not so, whilst we were Scourged with Scorpions.

That some, who it may be are still too much in Love with Persecution, have been Offended with what I have done, and misrepresented it, makes this publication the more Necessary, for if we are called

The Epistle Dedicatory.

called to Mourn for National Sins, 'tis fit we should know them, that we may with all possible Fervor, entreat the Lord of his Rich Grace and Mercy, to Deliver us from those Judgments, which are wont to pursue these Guilt.

S I R,

We have known days of great Tribulation upon the Account of Religion; in the Heat of them the 1000, the Place which your Lady Mother Adorns as well as Inhabits, was Patmos to me; there the Saints Assembled, there we saw the Primitive Times, there we had our Antelucanos Conventus, the Doors being shut for fear of the Jews, there we remembered our Friend in the Indies, and in your Return we have seen the Return of our Prayers.

It calls for Songs and Davids Harp to see you come home Crown'd with that which is infinitely better than the Treasure of the East, though with that too; when many others in exchange of Religion left behind, bring thence nothing but Apes and Peacocks.

Now the Lord who can do good against evil, hath brought back our Captivity, and enlarged the Curtains of his Tabernacle among us, we can meet at Ornan's House, and sit with safety as well as delight, under the shadow of the Tree of Life; you have not been afraid, nor ashamed to appear in the place of our Solemnities, and a grateful remembrance we retain of your endeared kindness.

At your feet, Sir, I set down these Papers, which if they be agreeable, as I think they are, I am sure you have both Integrity and Courage to own them; I know you to be one of those that wish for the Godly Discipline of the Primitive Church, and would have it restored, that the Lord Jesus may reign with more glory among us, to whose Grate both you, and all yours are recommended by

June 26th.

1690.

S I R,

Your Humble Servant,

William Woodward.

Luke



Luke 23. ver. 28.

But Jesus, turning unto them, said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for your selves, and for your Children.

After Pontius Pilate had pronounced Sentence of Death against our Lord, he was led forth to Mount Calvary, the place of his Crucifixion; 'tis said, v. 27. *there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.* Our Saviour Jesus Christ, as the Great High Priest, was now about to offer up upon the Cross that Great Sacrifice, which was to take away the sin of the World; and it was meet to be performed in the presence of all the people. This was *Die Cippurim*, the great Day of Expiation and Atonement, in which our Jubile began. *A great multitude of people followed him.* In which there might be some prefiguration too, that notwithstanding all the malice and opposition of the World, the Amazing Love of Christ, in dying for sinners, would in all Ages draw multitudes after him. *When I am lifted up from the Earth, saith our Lord, I will draw all men unto me, signifying by what death he should die,* John 12. 32, 33. and Chap. 3. 14. *Moses lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.* The Brazen Serpent was his Type, which healed all bitten of Serpents, that looked up un-

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to it. The means was not *likely*, but weak and despicable, for what could a *Serpent of Brasse* do? Why not rather a *Serpent of Gold*? The *Serpent of Brasse* was Gods Ordinance, and by his Blessing healed, whiles the *Golden Calves* of Mans Invention bring both a snare and a curse. There were also *Sundry Women* which bewailed and lamented him, either as an innocent, excellent person, unjustly condemned to die, or else from a Principle of Divine Faith and Love, knowing, that their sins made his Cross heavy, for their sakes he was numbred with *Transgressors*, and was now going to lay down his Life upon the *Mountain of Myrrh* and *Hill of Frankincense*. Our Lord, it seems, heard the voice of their weeping, (O let him hear the voice of England's weeping this day) and turning to them said, *Daughters of Jerusalem weep not for me, but weep for your selves, and for your Children*, *ὡν κλάετε*, which notes bitter weeping, with all the outward Expressions of inward trouble of Heart; *Weep not for me, O ye Daughters of Jerusalem*, who am now going to triumph upon the Cross, as well as to die; *but weep for your selves, and for your Children*, because of the infinite miseries, which will suddenly break in both upon *Jerusalem*, and the *Land of Judea*. Those sore judgments of Sword and Famine are coming to you upon the Wings of the Wind, this Generation shall not pass away ere *Jerusalem*, which was once the *City of God*, the *Excellency of Beauty*, the *Crowned City*, and Joy of the whole Earth, shall be made a hissing, and an abomination to all the Countreys round about, *weep for your selves, and for your Children*, for the days are coming in which the barren Womb and dry Breasts shall be accounted Blessings; better the tender and delicate Women had never been Mothers, than through want and Famine to eat their Children of a span long. When a *Papist* came to *Bishop Hooper* at the Stake, ready for the Fire, with a pretence of compassion, saying, *Sir, I am sorry to see you thus*, the *Martyr* replied, and haply in allusion to this of our Lord, *Be sorry for thy self, man, and lament thy own wickedness, for I am well, I thank God; and Death so me for Christs sake, is welcome. Weep for your selves and your Children. Jerusalem was now become like the Cities of the Nations, like that Heathenish City of Nineveh, Civitas sangu-*

man, a Bloody City, Nahum 3. 1. in her was found the Blood of all the Lords Prophets and Righteous Servants, the Blood of the Son of God, and Saviour of the World, whence 'tis that she is compared unto a dry Tree, Luke 23. 31. as being fitted for that Fire, which the Justice of God would shortly kindle in it by the Roman Legions. From the words we observe,

1. *The Saints present Sufferings deserve not Tears in comparison of the future sufferings of cruel Persecutors; there is no proportion between a Drop and an Ocean, a Moment and Eternity.*

2. *Those that have Bowels of Compassion should mourn upon the prospect they have of the miseries which will follow a National Oppression, and Persecution of the Truth.*

In the opening of this point we shall consider these five things.

1. *The Ground of Persecution.*

2. *When Persecution is National.*

3. *The Law lessens not the Guilt of Persecution.*

4. *Persecution brings sore Judgments.*

5. *Persecution calls for Mourning.*

1. *The Oppression and Persecution of the Truth proceeds from the Natural Enmity of Man against the Light of Truth and Holiness, which serves only to vex the Conscience when it doth not renew the Heart. The Prophets, Apostles, the Saints and Martyrs, were Burning and Shining Lights, shining in Holiness, burning with Zeal; thundering in their Doctrine, lightning in their Life. The Two Witnesses in their Sackcloth tormented them that dwelt on the Earth, Revel. 11. 3, 10. the Divine Light shining through their Sackcloth offended the tender Eyes of the Antichristian World: The Prophet Elias tormented Akab, and Jezebel, who vowed his Death, yet was he taken up to Heaven in peace with a peculiar mark of Honour, 2 Kings 2. 11. John the Baptist tormented Incestuous Herod by naming his Herodias, Mat. 14. 3, 10, 11. 'Tis Death to touch the sore place of Great Persons, either in Church or State; because the Two Witnesses, who were Oyl and Light, Revel. 11. 4. were bold to say the Pope was Antichrist, Rome was Babylon, the Religion there was Superstition and*

Idolatry, it gave such vexation to the Followers of the Beast, that they could not rest nor be merry till they saw their dead Bodies lye in the Streets of the Great City, *Revel. 11. 7, 8, 10.* Cain who was of the wicked one, slew his Brother; and wherefore slew he him? because his own Works were evil, and his Brothers righteous, *1 John 3. 12.* The Targum on Genesis says, wicked Cain denied the Providence of God, and the Judgment to come, and because righteous Abel asserted both, therefore his Brother slew him. Cain is dead, says Buchelzerus, he is dead, but he lives still in his Heirs and Executors. *Qui clavam ejus sanguine Abelis rubentem circumferunt.* Who carry about with them as a Holy Relique Cain's Bloody Club.

2. The Oppression and Persecution of the Truth may be said to be *National*, when it hath wrought it self into the *Laws* of the Land: And indeed Persecution is never so brisk and lively, as when it hath the Law on its side: It hath ever been the wisdom of those, that erect *Golden Images* for Worship in the Plain of *Dura*, that is in their Generation, to procure a Decree from *Nebuchadnezzar* in favour of them, *Dan. 3. 1, 7.* there is such a thing as framing mischief by a Law, *Psal. 94. 20, 21.* They were Jews, that said, *We have a Law, and by our Law he ought to die,* *John 19. 7.* and when once a Law is passed, they gather themselves together against the Soul of the righteous, and condemn the Innocent Blood. The Followers of the Lamb become Criminals, and the best of Men are made offenders for a word. This, the Holy Ghost calls weighing the violence of the hands, *Psal. 58. 2.* Justice is wont to be represented to us with a *Ballance* in her Hand, and *Palas* (in the Hebrew) signifies not only to weigh, but to frame any thing by Rule and Line, so that the expression of weighing the violence of the hands, notes profound exquisite Malice and Oppression under the specious pretence of precise and accurate Righteousness. The Thrones of Justice whiles Thrones of Ivory, *1 King. 10. 18.* pure and white are honourable, but if they degenerate, and become Thorns of Iniquity, they are no longer under the care and regard of God, but are an abomination to him.

3. When Oppression and Persecution, by the Craft and Arts of Bad men, gain the Countenance of the Law, that doth not Lessen

sen the Guilt, but Aggravate it. When Pilate boasted of his power over our Lord, as tho it were within the compass of his Commission, either to Crucifie, or Release him, Jesus answered, Thou couldst have no power at all against me, Except it were given thee from above, therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the Greater Sin, John 19. 10. 11. Hence it appears, that Magistracy and Government is Gods Ordinance; The powers that be are ordained of God, Rom. 13. 1. for the defence of the Innocent, and the terrour of evil doers, ver. 3. and though man, exalted on high, presumes to do his pleasure; making his Will the measure of Justice, yet is he accountable to God, who never cloaths any person with so absolute and unlimited Authority, as to acquit the Guilty, and condemn the Just. It gives a crimson and scarlet dye to the wickedness of Persecutors, when they serve their Malice upon Gods Ordinance, and make the Government a Covering for their Oppression; therefore saith our Lord, He that delivered me unto thee, hath the greater Sin: He, that is, Judas, the Sanedrim, or the people of the Jews, have the greater Sin. Jezebel makes use of the Kings name and Seal, not without the Formality of the Law, and a Fast too, to take away the vineyard and Life of Naboth, but her Judgment and destruction did not slumber, notwithstanding her Complement, for of this Jezebel the Lord spake, The Dogs shall eat Jezebel by the Wall of Jezreel, 1 Kings 21. 23. this painted Queen is mentioned in the Revelation, as tho she still Lived and Reigned in the Churches, chap. 2. 20, 21. Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth her self a Prophetess to teach and seduce my Servants to commit Fornication, and to eat things Sacrificed unto Idols, and I gave her space to Repent, and she Repented not, ver. 22. Behold, I will cast her into a Sea, and them that commit adultery with her into Great Tribulation, except they Repent of their deeds: ver. 23. and I will kill her children with Death, and all the churches shall know, that I am he that searcheth the reins and hearts, and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. It was a great blemish in the church of Thyatira to retain so much honour for this Jezebel, bywhom it's likely some Naboth's suffered, though we might find the Prophets of the Lord in the name of Naboth; yet we shall content our selves to observe that every man

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man as well as *Naboth* hath a *vineyard*, which is the *Inheritance* of his *Fathers*. The possession of a good Conscience, and they must not part with it to humor King *Ahab*, but must rather run all hazards, and fall a sacrifice to this wicked *Jezebel*, who, when she can with her Painted Beauty, steal away the hearts of Princes, will get the stamp of the *Royal Authority*, upon her bloody Contrivances, and destroy every *Naboth*, as a blasphemer of God and the King, because he will not alienate the Inheritance of his Fathers, nor suffer his *Vineyard* to be Converted into a Garden of bitter *Herbs*, 1 *Kings* 21. 2. Magistrates are said to be *Shields*, rather than *Swords*, *Psal.* 47. 9. their office is the Defence of *Vertue* and *Holiness*, 'tis an accursed piece of *Sacrilege* to take down the *Golden Shields* of the Temple, and beat them into *Swords*, and then consign them to the *Philistines*, or to take the sacred *Horns* of the *Altar* of the Lord, and adorn the *Head of the Beast* with them. that with a better Grace he may Gore the Saints, to the Joy of the whole earth, or to entertain the *Levites*, who are Joyned to the Lord by a *Covenant of Salt*, with poisoned wine in the *Golden Bowls* of the *Sanctuary*.

4. *Oppression* and *Persecution* of the Truth, though gilded with those great Names of *Law*, *Justice*, *Publick Safety*, are always accompanied with terrible Judgments. The Sin is very daring and provoking, other Sins affront the *Deity*, but *Persecution* brings to mind that of *Caesar*, *Miles faciem feri*, it smites God upon the face, it wounds him in the *Apple of his eye*, *Zeck.* 2 8. When *Paul* was mad against the Church like the ravening *Wolf of the Evenings*, for he was of the Tribe of *Benjamin*, *Gen.* 49. 27. *Phil.* 3. 5. our Saviour call'd to him out of Heaven, and bid him hold, for he set all his wounds a bleeding afresh *Acts* 9. 4. There was a curse, which fell upon the earth by the Sin of *Adam*, *Gen.* 3. 17. and man multiplyeth the curse upon himself by his *Implacable Enmity* against the seed of God: whiles the *Jews* were the *Segulla*, the peculiar Treasure of of the Lord, all sorts of *Plagues*, did light upon the *Egyptians*, and the nations round about, for oppressing them; but when the *Jews* became *Loammi*, and ceased to be the people of God, all sorts of *Plagues* beset themselves, because they persecuted their *Little Sister*, the anointed of the Lord. Where Christ appears

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in any of his Poor Followers, there is some Signature of his Kingly Spirit upon them, which the envious Spirit of man, not being able to endure, seeks to extinguish, that the Inheritance may be his; The Antichristian State and Church of Rome, which is set forth by *Babylon* for her Idolatry; by *Sodom*, for her filthiness and Immoralities; by *Egypt*, for her oppression and persecution, is under this condemnation, that the time shall come; that there shall no more be heard in her, the voice of the Bridegroom, and the Bride, Rev. 18. 23.

1. There shall be no more of that cruel and bloody race; The *Inquisition* hath made *Spain* poor, and the *Dragoons* have made *France* weak; Oppression and Persecution have broken in pieces all the four Famous Empires of the World, set forth in *Danjel*, c. 2. v. 32 by the Head of fine Gold, Arms and Breasts of Silver, Belly and Thighs of Brass, Legs of Iron, and Feet part of Iron and part of Clay, The Empires of the *Assyrians*, *Medes* and *Persians*, *Grecians*, and *Romans*. 'Twas no contemptible counsel which *Tertullian* gave *Scapula* a Bloody Persecutor, *Sinobis non parcis, tibi parce, si non tibi, Carthagini*, if thou wilt not spare us, yet spare thy self, if not thy self, yet spare thy City *Carthage*. But it suits best with our Text to look a little, into that which befell the *Jews* after their Crucifixion of our Lord, they had many *Prodights*, which did foreshew their desolation, and the desolations did answer their *Prodights*. A *Star* is seen over the City like a *Flaming Sword*, *Armies* of *Soldiers* seen in the Air, a *Cow* at the *Altar*, *Calves* a *Lamb*, the *Brass* gates of the Temple notwithstanding their Locks and Bolts, flew open in the night, *Voices* heard from Heaven (*migrantes hinc*) let us go hence, one *Jesum*, son of *Ananias*, went about four years, crying, *Hoe, Hoe, Woe, to Jerusalem*. Now the Vengeance was every way correspondent to the Tokens of it, one million of *Jews* slain by Sword, Famine, and Pestilence, near one hundred thousand made Captives and Slaves, the tender Mothers and delicate Women, Eat their own Children of a Span long; the *Historian* saith, that there was one Woman, that in the bitterness of her distress, slew and boiled her Son, and presently Eat a part of him, we may suppose the Head, or an Arm, or a Leg, and then laid up the Remainder;

der; not long after, some of the seditious Bloody Villains of the City came to her, threatening her with present Death, unless she would bring forth what Provision she had, who immediately brought forth that part of her Child which remained, at the sad sight whereof, even those merciless wretches were smitten with sudden horror and amazement, inasmuch, that the Mother spake to them, saying, What! will you be more compassionate than a Mother? Will not you Eat where I have Eaten? But of this we need say no more, because the *History of the Destruction of Jerusalem* is in many of your Hands: Only observe that in the Prophet *Amos*, ch. 1. 9. Thus saith the Lord, for three Transgressions of Tyrus, and for four I will not turn away the Punishment thereof, because they delivered up the whole Captivity to Edom, and remembred not the Brotherly Covenant, v. 10, but I will send a Fire on the Walls of Tyrus, which shall devour the Pallaces thereof.

Here we may observe, that though the Lord be Gracious, and Mercifull, and Long-suffering, bearing with Three sins, many sins; yet when it comes to the Fourth sin, which is Persecution, he will not pardon. *Damascus* fourth sin was Persecution, v. 3. so *Gaza*, v. 6. so *Edom*, v. 11. so *Ammon*, v. 13. so *Tyrus*, v. 9, 10. which delivered up the whole Captivity to *Edom*, there had once been a Brotherly Covenant, between *Solomon King of Jerusalem*, and *Hiram King of Tyus*, but that it seems was forgotten, and the *Tyrians* became Treacherous and Cruel, for which the Lord did wonderfully chastise them by *Nebuchadnezzar*, who after a fourteen years Siege, made *Tyrus* Desolate. *Tyrus* was a famous City, built upon a Rock in an Island in the midst of the Sea, her Merchants were Princes, her Houses were Pallaces, but no strength of any Place or People, by Nature or Art, or both, can secure against those sharp Arrows which God hath ordained for those that inhumane by Persecute their Brethren.

5. Those that have Bowels of compassion, should mourn upon the prospect they have of the miseries which will follow a Partial Oppression, and Persecution of the Truth.

Our Lord wept and lamented over *Jerusalem*; O *Jerusalem*, *Jerusalem*, that Killest the Prophets, and Stonest them that are sent

sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy Children together even as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings, and ye would not; behold your House is left to you desolate, Mat. 23. 37, 38. Luk. 19. 41. It eminently appears, that our Lords Love was great to Jerusalem, in that after he arose from the Dead, when he charged the Apostles to Preach Repentance and Remission of sins to all Nations, he gave them particular Direction to begin at Jerusalem, Luk. 24. 47. that that very place, that had drawn upon it self the guilt of his precious Blood, might have the first offer of Salvation by its Merits. The Prophet Isaiah tells us, that his Bowels should sound like a Harp for Moab, and his inward part for Kirharez, chap. 16. 11. this Kirharez was Heliopolis the City of the Sun, where the Sun was the Idol of Worship, but Moab is not blamed barely for her Superstition and Idolatry, there is Persecution laid to her charge, v. 4. Moab reproached the People of God, in their Captive state as Outcasts, and would give them no Protection, quite forgetting that the Jews were a-kin to Moab; thence the Prophet foreseeing that the Golden Vial of Wrath, would be poured forth upon Moab, within three or four years, v. 14. crys out, that his Bowels should sound like a Harp for Moab, (i. e.) their Miseries would be such as should touch the Bowels of all that ever heard of it.

Use 1. Exam. The Church of England professes, at this day, before God, Angels and Men, to bewail her Sins, to take shame, and turn to the Lord our God, that he may have mercy upon us, and Heal our Land. Now if we must Mourn for Englands Sins, 'tis fit that we should know them; sometimes the Sin of a Nation is so Open, notorious, and visible that it may be found without secret search, as the Prophet speaks, Jer. 2. 34. but it is not always thus, for we read there was once, [Babel] Anathema, an Accursed Thing hidden inter Suppellectilia, among the Stuff, Joshua 7. 11. Joshua that famous Servant of the Lord, was owned by miracles, and crowned with Success and Victory, till he came before the City of Ai, where Israel fled before their Enemies; whereupon the Hearts of all the people melted, and be-

came as *Water* ver. 5. and *Joshua* rent his cloaths, and fell to the earth upon his face, before the *Ark of the Lord* until the Even-Tide, he, and the Elders of *Israel*, and put dust upon their heads, and *Joshua* said, *Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us? Would to God we had been content and dwelt on the other side Jordan. O Lord what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies?* ver. 7, 8. And the Lord said, *Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my Covenant, which I commanded them, for they have even taken of the Accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled; also they have put it even among their own Stuff,* ver. 10, 11. It cannot be thought but that the Tribes of *Israel* were stained with those Pollutions, which commonly accompany so great an Host, such as *Lying, Swearing, Intemperance, Uncleaness,* and the like, and yet the wrath of the Lord kindled among them at this time, for a *hidden wickedness*, which few or none took notice of, the *Accursed Thing*, which provoked the anger of the Lord, was *hidden among the Stuff*. The Sins of *England* are many and great at this day, the Lord be merciful unto us; and to our whole Land. *Pride, Drunkenness, Whoredom, Swearing and Prophaneness* of every kind, reign every where, *Conformist and Nonconformist* have great reason to lye in the Dust together, because of these Abominations; But, besides all these Sins, 'tis possible, there may be some *Achan*, some *Accursed thing* amongst us, which hath not been taken notice of; The children are come to the Birth, and there is no strength to bring forth; more mens hands are upon their Loins, than upon their Swords: we are filled with the Alarms of War, and no one knows how long: Let none take that ill, which is done in Integrity, I must search among the *Stuff* for the *Accursed thing*, which is a work so hazardous, and unacceptable, that I could not subdue my self to the undertaking, but by the sence of my duty to God, and my Country.

The *Stuff*, which I suspect, and must search into, concerns our *Ecclesiastical Affairs*, and I will see by the help
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of God, whether the *Accursed thing*, be not hid under the covering of *Decency and Order, Penal Laws, Laws for Uniformity, Subscriptions, Declarations, Liturgies, Articles, Laws for Ceremonies, and Forms of Prayer.*

'Tis as clear as the Sun, that for near thirty years now last past, sixteen hundred Ministers of the Gospel of Christ, if not more, have suffered very hard things upon the account of *Conscience*, by reason of great Fines, long Imprisonments, some of those who were wont to break the Spiritual Bread, have died for want of their natural Bread, both the Shepherds and the Flocks have been starv'd in their several kinds. Many Thousands of the Families of the Protestant Dissenters have been sorely distressed by Penal Laws upon the account of Religion. And if the sufferings of our Brethren were written at large, as the sufferings of the Saints at other times have been. Mr. Fox his book of *Martyrs*, would be but an *Enchiridion* in comparison of it.

If any shall say that the *Nonconformists* and *Protestant Dissenters* have been buffeted for their faults, in all this time; and that the *Church of England* is Innocent; that it was her duty, and became her Wisdom, though it was not so agreeable to the sweetness of her nature, and meekness of her disposition, yet it became her Wisdom, as the chaste and tender spouse of Christ to lay aside the Scepter and the Dove, and to take into her hand the bloody Club of Cain to Martyr the Dissenters into conformity: To this I reply, Let's have a fair hearing before we be Judged. The Oppression and Persecution of the truth is a great Sin, where e're tis found. The Church in her Prayers for this day seems not to make any confession for this Sin, she thinks her hands are clean, she eats and wipes her mouth, and says she has done no wickedness, Prov. 30. 20. and yet 'tis a Bishop that says, though it was said indeed before he was Bishop, in his preface to the Relation of the death of the primitive Persecutors, that they who let themselves loose, to all the Rages of a mad Prosecution of some poor undiscerning and deluded People, ought seriously to profess their Repentance

of this fury, in Instances, that may be as visible and edifying as their rage hath been publick and Destructive, And now we proceed to Examine, whether some drops of *Abels* blood may not be found in the skirts of England, and search into the Stuff, that we may know whether there be any Accursed thing hid in it; That we may accordingly govern our selves in these days of Fasting and Lamentation.

The first thing we shall consider, that was imposed upon the Nonconformists is, the subscription in the Act of Uniformity, with the Oath in the Oxford Act, in which are these words, *I A. B. do declare, that it is not lawful upon any pretence whatsoever, to take Arms against the King.*

Again, *I A. B. do swear that it is not lawful, — We refused thus to declare and swear; and here observe these three things.*

First, a man may believe a Proposition to be true, though it be disputable, which yet he would not be willing to swear that it was true; As I believe the Pope to be Antichrist, yet I am not willing to swear that the Pope is Antichrist; I believe by Mystical Babylon is meant Rome, I believe the Saints in Heaven know not our affairs here, yet I should be unwilling to swear it.

Secondly, That *Barclay Grotius* and others, who have written Largely in favour of the Prerogative of Crowned Heads, do yet allow that there are some cases, in which it is lawful for the Subject to take Arms against the King, and if the King turns Tyrant, Governing not by Law, but by his own Will, he doth *Excidere de jure, etsi hereditario.*

Thirdly, All the Nobility and Gentry of England, all the Nobility and Gentry of Scotland, and all the Protestant Princes beyond the Seas in their Proceedings, against the late King *James*, have justified the Nonconformists in refusing the Oxford Oath, Whose turn is it to take shame now?

The Second thing we must consider, is that about Re-ordination in the Act of Uniformity, as though Ordination by Presbyters and Pastors of Churches, were not sufficient, without

without the laying on of the Hands of those we now call Bishops, Lords Bishops.

To this I say,

1. That the Word of God, in the New Testament, makes no difference between the Bishop and the Presbyter, or Pastor of a Church. He that is a Pastor of a Church of Christ, is a Gospel Bishop, *Christ's Bishop*. *Act. 20. 17, 28.* the same persons that are called Presbyters in one place, or Elders, are in the other called Bishops, or Overseers. So *Tit. 1. 5, 6, 7.* Timothy was ordained by the laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery, *1 Tim. 4. 14.* of this Judgment were *Augustine, Jerom, Chrysostome*, with many others among the Greeks and Latins.

2. All our Learned Divines at the Reformation from Popery, held that the Ordination by the Pastors of Churches was valid and good, the *23 Article*, of *minist'ring in the Congregation* seems to speak as much; of this Judgment are the French Churches, Belgick and Helverick Churches, besides many others. I need not name the Church of Scotland, for Scotland hath justified all our Nonconformity, by restoring the ejected Ministers to their places, as of old.

3. Our Diocesan Bishops may glory over us, as the Kings Bishops, Bishops of the State, but they must not pretend to be so near in Blood to the Scripture Bishops, of the first two hundred years, as the Pastors of single Congregations; wherefore I say, that Ordination by the hands of the Pastors of Churches, filled with the Holy Ghost, is much more eligible than by Diocesan Bishops.

The Third point we must consider, is the Declaration in the Act of Uniformity, which is this; *I A. B. do here declare my unfeigned Assent and Consent, to all and every thing contained, and prescribed in and by the Book, Intituled the Book of Common Prayer.* Here we refuse.

1. In the matter of Assent. Many things might be named, but one shall suffice; we can't Assent to that passage in the Creed, commonly called *Athanasius Creed*, where 'tis said, that every one that doth not keep that Faith whole, shall without doubt perish Everlastingly. Now one Article of that Creed is about

about the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son, which the Greek Churches did not Believe nor receive; If I believe it was an Error in the Greek Churches, and that they see not clearly into that Mystery, yet I must be very bold, if I leap into the Throne of Judgment, and pronounce them Lost and Damned. The Procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son, is a most profound Mystery, and very much obscured, by bringing in that word *Procession*; Which the Scripture on that occasion never uses. The Church of Rome indeed solemnly *Anathematizes* the Greeks in *Bulla Cane* every Maundy Thursday, as so many Schismatics and Apostates: 'Tis a considerable point of Popery, to curse and destroy all that seem to differ from us in Opinion.

2. In the matter of consent, we cannot consent to every thing contained, and prescribed in and by the Book, intitled the *Book of Common Prayer*. I intend not to speak of the *Ceremonies*, the *Cross*, the *Surplice*, because all know they came from Rome, and when Rome falls they will fall too. Neither shall I look into the *Prayers of the Church*, though that is no very commendable passage, wherewith she is so oft upbraided, in praying that the Late King *James*, a profest Papist, might persevere in the Faith; but, that which I shall account for, is our Refusal to Read the imposed Form of *Common Prayer*, a point a little more difficult, but not less material than that of *Ceremonies*; and here pray judge between *Us*, and the Church of England.

First, During the *Apostles time*, and two or three hundred years after, there was no *Liturgy* used nor imposed, neither did they direct for the drawing up of any, and enforcing it by Penal Laws; it hath been abundantly cleared by those, that have laboured in this controversy, that the *Pastors of Churches* in the primitive Times, did not *ἀναγιγνωσκοντες* Read Prayers, *de Scripto recitare*: They did Read *Psalms*, *Chapters*; but they did not Read Prayers, *Acts* 12. 5. The Prayer of the Church for *Peter's* Inlargement was *ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ* Instant, Fervent, without ceasing, but not by any

any prescribed Form, as is agreed upon by all sides; some have been so curious as to observe, that in the Primitive Times, the Saints usually prayed with their *Eyes fixed on the Mercy-seat*, or closed, which utterly disables Persons for Reading Prayers.

2. The Pastors of Churches in the Primitive Times, were under the *teaching of the Anointing*, and had the Spirit and Gift of Prayer. The *son d'usage* in *Justin Martyr Apol. 2.* is vindicated beyond all exceptions, by which it's most manifest, that they prayed not then in their Assemblies, by Book or Form, but from the Gift and Ability they had. So likewise that of *Tertullian Apol. 1. Sine monitore, quia de pectore oramus*, shews clearly, not only, that the Primitive way of Prayer was not by prescribed Liturgies, but that it was the *Heathenish way of Prayer*: The Christians prayed by Heart, the Heathens prayed by Book: The Heathenish Greeks, Persians, Romans, had their Monitors, Priests, and Sacred Persons, who were wont to say Prayers *in Biblis*, out of a Book. This is a matter well known, from the Authority of *Apuleius, Pausanias, Livy, Cicero, Lactantius*.

3. When the Christians were so numerous at *Constantinople*, that it was thought convenient to Dispose of them in several Churches, that zealous Emperour *Constantine the Great*, writes to *Eusebius, Bishop of Casarea*, for fifty Bibles, for the use of the Churches, but there is no mention of any one *Common-Prayer-Book*. *Euseb. l. 4. c. 34, 36.*

4. When Forms of Prayer began to be used, every Church made use of what Forms they pleased; so *Socrates Scholast. lib. 5.* And it appears by the *Epistles of Pope Pius the Fifth*, and *Gregory the Thirteenth*, prefix to the *Breviarium Romanum*, that the several Churches of the *Roman Communion*, had their several Liturgies, until that branch of the Churches Liberty was taken away by the *Council of Trent*. Here in *England*, before the Reformation, we had several Modes of *Common Prayer-Books*, some after the use of *Sarum*, others after the use of *York, Lincoln*, which afterward were reduced to one for publick use, and imposed by *Law*.

5. 'Twas

5. 'Twas the Ignorance, Carnality, the Sloth and Laziness of the Clergy, together with their Pride, which first brought in, and imposed Service-Books upon the Churches; as for those Liturgies, which bear the Great names of *St. James, Peter, Mark, Clemens, Basil, and Chrysostom*—they are known Forgeries. When the Church began to be an Harlot; when Bishops were not *Silver Trumpets*, but *Tinkling Cymbals*, Clouds without *Water*, Bells without *Clappers*, and Breasts without *Milk*; when the Bishops in Councils, as of *Ephesus* and *Chalcedon*, profest they did *Literas ignorare*, and could not write their own Names to confirm their Canons, then came in our Liturgies.

6. 'Tis no part of our business to enquire whether in some cases it may not be lawful to use a Set Form of Prayer; but I would satisfy you in this, that our way of Worship, without the Restraint of Set Forms, is most agreeable to the way of Worship, used by the Holy Apostles, and by the Primitive times, for many hundreds of years past before Set Forms were used, and many hundreds more before they were imposed. Now I must desire you to observe this one thing, that there is great difference between *Using a Set Form*, and *Imposing it*, which I shall clear to you thus. We find *Levit. 5. 7.* that there was provision made for such as were Poor in their Estates, that if they were not able to bring for a *Trespass-Offering*, or *Sin-Offering*, a *Lamb*, or *Kid of the Goats*, he might bring *Two Turtle-Doves*, or *Two young Pigeons*, which the Lord would accept of; but if a Rich man, that had Flocks and Herds, had brought *Two young Pigeons*, the Lord would have abhorred it, and much more, if all the Rich men in *Israel* had agreed together, from a principle of Covetousness, in making a Law, that it should be penal for any man, be he Rich or Poor, to bring any thing for a *Sin-Offering*, besides *Two young Pigeons*.

Many persons in the Churches may be poor in Parts, and in Gifts, and may need the help of a *Set Form of Prayer*, but to *Impose by Law a Set Form* upon all, be their ability for Prayer never so great, is to bind us up to the offering of *Doves and Pigeons*, when we are able to bring before

before the Lord, *Lambs, Kids and Bullocks*; this were a Law to be disliked: Or thus, whereas the condition of some that are *Lame and Impotent*, requires the *help of Crutches* to go to *Market*, and they are to be pitied under their *Infirmities*, yet if a Law were made, that every man that comes to *Market without Crutches*, should lose one of his *Ears*, you would all cry out, that it was an unequal and unrighteous Law: Some may need and use *Set Forms*, but to impose them upon all under severe and terrible Penalties, is that which hath no warrant from *Scripture*, nor the first and best Ages of the Church.

A fourth Point we are to look into, is, that *Branch* of the *Subscription*, required by the *Act of Uniformity*, which concerns the *Covenant*; it runs thus, *I do declare, that I do hold there Lies no obligation upon me, or any other person, from the Oath commonly called the Solemn League or Covenant, to endeavour any Change or Alteration of the Government, either in Church or State, and that the same in it self was an unlawful Oath, and Imposed on the Subjects of the Realm, against the known Laws and Liberties of this Kingdom.* We have Refused to Renounce this *Covenant*; now consider what we say for our selves.

1. There are many useful Preachers, and Men of good Learning, that never read a Law-book in their Lives; they know nothing of *Magna Charta, Bracton, Littleton, Cook, Common Law, Statute Law*—Is it reasonable then to require them to Declare the *Covenant* is contrary to *known Laws* and *Liberties*, which they are utterly unacquainted with?

2. Though I am one of those that never took the *Covenant*, yet when I consider, That the *King, Lords and Commons* of *England and Scotland*, have taken it, 'tis a very strange thing, if it should bind none of them, not one of them: A man had need spend some years in *Casistical Divinity*, and read all the Books which are Extant *De Obligatione Juramenti*, before he absolve two or three Kingdoms, and declare understandingly that no one man is bound by that Oath, which almost every man took.

3. By the *Covenant* all persons were bound in their places

D

to

to endeavour a Reformation of the Church, according to the Scriptures, and the Examples of the Best Reformed Churches; is this an unlawful Oath? if a man should swear, that in his Place and Calling he would endeavour with all his might to cast every Idol out of the World, we see our King, the Lords and Commons of Scotland, have cast off Prelacy, and Established Presbytery: But I will speak no more to this Subject. By what you have heard, you may judge whether we have been straining at Gnats, or other men have swallowed Camels.

The fifth Point, and the Last we shall take notice of, is that passage in the Liturgy concerning the Commination, or Denouncing of Gods Anger and Judgments against sinners, which begins thus, *Cursed is the man, that maketh any Carved or Graven Image to worship it; Cursed is he, that curseth his Father and Mother: Cursed is he, that removeth his Neighbours Land-mark; And all the People are to say, Amen.* In the Preface to this Commination we have words to this purpose, *That until the Godly Discipline of the Primitive Church may be restored again, which is much to be wished, it is thought good, instead thereof, to Read the general sentences of Gods cursing against impenitent sinners, and that the People should answer to every sentence, Amen.* Upon this occasion I have these things to present to your meditation.

First, That those Excellent Persons our Reformers, and Compilers of this Book of Common-Prayer, had no full satisfaction in what was then done; They ingenuously confess, they came short of the Godly Discipline of the Primitive Times, and that the Reformation should have been carried on higher, if the Times would have given leave, and yet they had then their Government by Bishops, Arch-bishops, Chancellors, Registers, Arch-deacons, Surrogates and Proctors, as we have at this day. But as Moses gave the License of Divorces, because of the Jews hardness of heart, but from the beginning it was not so; in like manner our Reformers direct to this way of Commination and Cursing, instead of the Antient Discipline, allowing that from the beginning it was not so, *Matth. 19. 8.*

Secondly,

Secondly, 'Tis more than a hundred years since these Good men first recorded their hearty desires and wishes, for a higher, and more compleat Reformation, in these words, *Until the said Discipline may be restored again, which is much to be wished; and it is enough that the Church carries her Good Wishes with her through all Generations.* The *Bishop of Sarum* in his excellent Sermon upon *Psal. 144. 15.* before the House of Commons, calls upon them to carry the Reformation higher, as they desire to see the Church and State to prosper. *You can concur in giving the last finishings to our Reformation, many of the old Corruptions do yet remain among us in practice, and the Administration of the Ecclesiastical Authority is liable to great Objections. I will not run out into farther particulars, for it will be easie to find them, and if you once set about it, you will soon see what work there is before you.* Now if after all, there be nothing done for the Lord and his House, then will these wishes of our Reformers stand as a Testimony against our Prelates for ever.

Thirdly, Many of the Prophets, Apostles and Holy Men of old, fell into great Trouble by standing up in their places for a Reformation. *Idolatrous Ahab and Jezebel made Elijah weary of his Life. Isaiah the Prophet was (as Dorotheus saith) sawn asunder for opposing the Corruptions of his time: The Holy Apostles were charged by the Jews, though most falsely, that they turned the World upside down, Acts 17. 6. and accordingly they sought their Destruction. Our Lord Jesus Christ came in the time for Reformation, Heb. 9. 10. and pursued it so closely, that the rage of the Jews, the Priests, Scribes and Pharisees was kindled against him, and nothing but his Blood shed by false Accusation upon the Cross could quench it: We may compare John 2. 15. with Mat. 21. 12. where we find him cleansing the Temple, And he made a Scourge of small Cords, he drove them all out of the Temple, and the Sheep, and the Oxen, and poured out the Changers Money, and overthrew the Tables — In this*

this *Nehemiah* seems to have been his *Type*, *ch. 13. 8.* and it grieved me sore, therefore I cast forth all the Household-stuff of *Ussiah* out of the Chambers of the House of the Lord; 'tis a dangerous, yet a needful work to Cleanse and Reform: Our Lord Christ owned it, and upon that which our Lord Christ did of this kind, we may make these Remarks.

1. That with this *Reforming work*, our Lord began, and ended his Ministry, not once but twice, did he cast the buyers and sellers out of the Temple, Diseases are apt to return upon the Ecclesiastical body.

2. He scourged them out as so many *Beasts*, to shew that he was a *Lion* as well as a *Lamb*.

3. That in that necessary work he had no regard to his own safety, the zeal of the Lords House eat it up.

4. Men will never part with their gainful corruptions, till constrained by the rod.

5. The Lord makes a scourge for those that were wont to make a scourge for others, that disliked their Corruptions in worship, *Matth. 10. 17.*

6. Those are vile and base, and as so many *Beasts* in our Lords account, that are enemies to Reformation.

Fourthly, That which the Nonconformists of these Three Kingdoms, have Written for, Preached for, and Suffered for, is, that the Godly Worship, and Godly Discipline of the Primitive Church may be restored, which is much to be wished, So it was said by our Fathers, so it is now said by the Liturgy, and so we also say at this day; It was no crime heretofore, nay 'tis no crime now, when the Church-men say we need a farther Reformation, and it can be no crime in us neither; why then should we be afraid? That
expression

expression about the *Godly Discipline* stands in the *Liturgy* as well for the *Justification of the Nonconformists* as for a *Testimony against the Prelates*.

Fifthly, It was the *Glory of Moses* that he was faithful in the house of God Heb. 3. 5. He did all things according to the pattern in the Mount, it was also the *Glory of King Solomon*, that in building of the Temple, and ordering all things about the *Porch, Courts, Chambers, the Altars, Lavers, Tables and golden Candlesticks*, he kept precisely to divine direction, as in *1 Chron. 28. 11—19. The Lord made me understand in writing by his hand upon me. Even all the works of this pattern*; now if this were the *Glory of these great men* to keep to the Rule, it can never be our shame to walk in their steps, and follow their example, pressing continually to have all things in Gods House according to the *Pattern in the Mount*: Having this occasion to make mention of *Solomon*, and the *Magnificent Temple*, which he built, 'tis our present concernment to stand still a little and make some short reflections upon it.

1. I say, the first fixt place for solemn worship that ever God appointed was *Solomons Temple*; The *Tabernacle of Moses* was indeed the Place for Divine Service, to which the Tribes were to resort: But then the *Tabernacle* was a *walking Temple*, sometimes at *Shilo*, sometimes else where; For the space of about 500 years from *Moses* to *Solomon*, there was no fixt Place for worship, as afterwards the *Temple* was.

2. That the only fixt place for solemn worship by the immediate designation and appointment of God, was the *Temple at Jerusalem*; to the best of my knowledge there was never any before, or since, *John 4. 21. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem worship the Father; God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit, and in truth, ver. 24.*

3. Though

3. Though there had been many *Temples* in the land of *Canaan*, used by the Natives in Honour of their false Gods; yet the Lord would make use of none of them, but directs they should be all demolished and a new one built, *Deut. 12. 2.* *Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the Nations which ye shall possess, served their Gods, upon the Mountains, and upon the Hills, and under every green Tree; The Land of Canaan was a place of learning before Israel came into it, and of Religion too; but it was corrupted with superstition and Idolatry, in Josh. 15. 15, 42.* We read of *Kirjath Sepher*, *Kirjath Sanna* Cities of Books, of learning or the Law called *Deber*, as the Oracle for Wisdom, Eloquence, and Acuteness; these Temples were Rich and pompous, so far as we can guess by the remains we have of the History of those Times; yet the Lord in his Jealousie would have none of them spared, for Synagogues or Houses of Prayer, because they had been set apart for Idolatrous purposes.

4. Let's observe, the *Nature* and *Condition* of the Place, which the Wisdom of God singles forth out of all the world, where his *Holy Temple* should be built, 'twas *Ornan's Threshing floor*, *2 Chron. 3. 1.* with the *2 Sam. 24. 18.* Then Solomon began to build the House of the Lord at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David his Father in the Place that David had prepared in the Threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. There were many places at that time, where the Holy People were wont to Sacrifice, as *Gilgal*, *Shilo*, *illa omnia post-ponit*, but the Lord slights all these, and chooses the Threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, it's likely that this Ornan was of Princely descent as he had a Princely mind, which could readily part with any worldly Interest for Gods Service and Honour; his mind was as great as his Birth, and his devotion equal to both, there might be some mystery in this choice, which the Lord made of the Threshing Floor of Ornan, to shew,

I. That

1. That Temple-Work is hard work, 'tis *Threshing*.

2. That Temple-Work is to separate between the *Chaff* and the *Wheat*, the precious and the vile.

3. That the separation will not be perfect, till the end of all things, *mali in area nobiscum esse possunt, in horreo non possunt*. The wicked may mingle with us in the *Floor*, they shall not in the *Garner*.

5. And Lastly, Let's consider what the *Heathen* would say of this *Temple at Jerusalem*, which was the most magnificent and stately structure in the World, excelling in glory: no doubt but they would load it with Reproaches, and say, This Temple upon which *King Solomon* spent a hundred thousand Talents of Gold, and a thousand thousand Talents of Silver, 'tis after all but *Ornan's Threshing-floor*; 'tis but a *Barn*; our Temples are *Holy Places*, and to be preferred before that at *Jerusalem*. Now I have great assurance that *King Solomon* with all his wisdom was able to vindicate the *House of God* which he had built, and upon a fair hearing, to confound all those that disgraced it, *King Solomon* could tell those *Heathens*, that all their Temples were stained with Superstition and Idolatry, which *Ornan's Threshing-floor* never was: All their Temples were places of *Spiritual Whoredoms*, they were Erected by *Idolaters*, and Consecrated for *Idolatrous uses*, and that his Temple at *Jerusalem* did as much excel all the Temples of the *Heathen*, as a pure spotless *Virgin* doth an old wrinkled *Harlot*.

We shall now quit this Use of Examination, and search no further into the *stuff*. The Protestant Dissenters dare not flatter the Prerogatives of Princes, to their Destruction; they dare not Assent and Consent solemnly to that which they inwardly dislike; they dare not depart from that Ordination, which is according to the Scriptures, and

and the practice of the purest Churches; they dare not offer to the Lord *that which costs them nothing*, nor submit to those Forms of Prayer, which *quench the Spirit of Prayer*; they dare not renounce Covenants, as *contrary to the known Laws*, when the Laws to them are *utterly unknown*; they dare not but appear humbly in their places for the Restoration of the *Godly Discipline of the Primitive Church*, since all allow 'tis to be *wished for*; they dare not but with *Moses and Solomon*, keep to the *pattern in the Mount*, notwithstanding the Inventions and Commandments of Men; and if in all these things the Nonconformists are in the *right*, and have in their *Sackcloth* witnessed to the Truth, then ought the Church of England to hang down her head, smite upon her breast, and walk softly, because she hath been *cruel like the Ostrich in the Wilderness*, the *Tongue of the sucking Child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth*, for *thirst*, the young Children ask bread, and no man breaketh it unto them; they that did feed delicately, are desolate *in the streets*; they that were brought up in *Scarlet*, embrace *Dunghills*, Lam. 4. 3, 4, 5.

We come now to the *Second Use*, which is for *Exhortation*, and here let me beg and beseech you to lay aside all consideration of our own and our Brethrens Sufferings, and, as the *Elect of God*, put on bowels of compassion, Col. 3. 12. It will be some evidence to us, that we are the *elect of God*, if we can put on bowels of Mercy, if we can say in sincerity, as I hope we shall, O that our head, were Waters and our eyes fountains of tears that we might make our Meeting Place a *Bochim*, Judg. 2. 5. A place of bitter mourning, like the mourning of *Hadadrimmon* in the Valley of *Megiddo*, Zech. 12. 11. Because of all the Provocations, and Abominations of *England, Scotland and Ireland*; the cry of our Sins is gone up to Heaven against us, O let us endeavour by the cry of our Prayers and Tears, to silence the cry of our Sins, O Lord God, put bowels of mercy into every one of us; in the Hebrew language one word, (*Rahem*) signifies both Bowels and Mercy, and by a *Metathesis* of the Radical Letters, is made

made (*herein*) which signifies *Anathema*, to shew, that if we are without *bowels of Mercy* in this day of our Kingdom's Distress, we are under the *Curse*, and none of the Elect of God. It is a *Cain's mark* upon *Judas*, he lost his *bowels*, *Acts* 1. 18. and upon King *Jehoram* too, that he was diseased in his *bowels*, *2 Chron.* 21. 15. O! let us mingle our *hearts* and our *prayers*, no less than our *Faith*, with the holy Word of God as we go along, and cry aloud, that the God of all *Grace*, and Father of *Mercies*, would please to heal the *disease* which is in our *bowels*, and in the *bowels* of *England*, *Scotland* and *Ireland*. There is something peculiar in the *Judgments*, which have been armed against us of this *Generation*, here in *England*. There was in our *Metropolis* of *London* such a *consuming Pestilence*, as our *Fathers* never saw, there they died by thousands, where now they walk by thousands; there was such a *devouring Fire* as our *Fathers* never saw, a *Fire*, which had not learnt to distinguish between sacred and prophane, between the *Bible* and the *Comedy*, between places of common *Exchange*, and more *Divine Commerce*; And for all this his *Anger* is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still, *Isa.* 5. 25. Our condition at this day is somewhat prodigious, we are, and have been, for almost two years under the Influence of two *Suns*, *Alas* for the *Miseries* and *Desolations* of *Ireland*, there is the sound of the *Trumper*, the *Alarms* of *War*, there is the *devouring Sword*, there are *Garments* rouled in *Blood*; *Alas* for *disconsolate* and *desolate Ireland*; her *Towns* are *Burnt*, her *Houses* are *Spoiled*, her *Virgins* *Ravished*, all places filled with *Confusion* and *Slaughter*. *Ireland* is now an *Aceldema*, a *Field of Blood*. But *Glory*, *Glory* to him, that sits on the *Throne*, and to the *Lamb*, for ever and ever, the *Virgin Daughter* of *Scotland* begins to awake, and arise out of the *Dust*, to sit and sing as in the days of her *Youth*, as in the days when she came up out of the *Land of Egypt*, *Hos.* 2. 15. Now is fulfilled that which was spoken by *Isaias* the *Prophet*, saying, *The Land of Zebulun*, and the *Land of Nephthalim*, by the way of the *Sea*, beyond *Jordan*, *Galilee of the Gentiles*, the people which sat in

darkness saw great light, and to them which sat in the Region and Shadow of death, light is sprung up, Mat. 4. 14, 15, 16. This is no new thing in the course of Divine Providence, that those who were first in Trouble should be Relieved first.

There are two ways which I shall propose, wherein we ought to shew forth our Bowels of Mercy, for these Kingdoms.

1. By our personal Reformation; we Protestant Dissenters, are more especially obliged to cast away every Idol of Gold and Silver to the Moles, and to the Bars, Isa. 2. 20. 'Tis said among the Heathen, the Lord hath done great things for us, and indeed the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad, Psal. 126. 3, 4. He hath broken the Horn of the wicked, the Teeth of the ungodly; he hath loosed our Bands, taken the Burthen from our Shoulders, and set our Feet in a large place. The Lord hath turned again our Captivity, and it is as the Streams in the South, which wonderfully revives and comforts those that have born the heat of the day. We have often heard, that if there had been but four or five more holy Persons in Sodom, Sodom had been spared, and not destroyed by Fire and Brimstone from Heaven, Gen. 18. 32. Methinks I hear England, Scotland and Ireland crying to us with a loud voice, If ye Love us, and have any Compassion for us, then turn unto the Lord unfeignedly, live like so many Nazarites, keep your Covenants, pay your Vows, and perfume your Houses with the Morning and Evening Sacrifice of Prayer and Praise. Dearly beloved in our Lord Jesus, shall it be written down by the Angels which attend our solemn Assemblies, that this Man and that Woman were Born amongst us this day? Amen, Amen, Psal. 87. 6.

Secondly, By Importunate and Fervent Prayer both for Church and State.

First, That God would Anoint the Eyes of England with Eye-salve, that she may see into those things which concern her peace, Revel. 3. 18. Let's chuse rather to fall a Sacrifice for England's Prosperity, than sow Pillows under her Elbows, Ezek. 13. 18. lest she sleep the sleep of Death, and

and become the scorn of Nations; Lord enlighten England, that she may see her sins, and acknowledge them. *He that covereth his sin shall not prosper, but whose confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy,* Prov. 28. 13. The word is (*Pesha*), *Piaculum*, his greater sin, for we can readily enough confess our lesser sins, but 'tis our greater sin, we are apt to cover, deny, excuse or lessen: 'Tis Death to reflect upon *Herodias*; England hath touched the Lords Anointed, and oppressed the Followers of the Lamb. She must not content her self to bewail on these days of Solemn Fasting and Prayer her Debaucheries, though they are abominable, but she must add to her Litanies, which she hath hitherto forgotten; *From all the sore Judgments of the Sword, Famine and Pestilence, which are wont to follow the Oppression and Persecution of the Truth, Good Lord deliver us,* Lord open the Eyes of England to look into her Laws, and see if there be none that are written in Blood; Lord open the Eyes of England to look into her Courts of Judicature, and see if Justice and Judgment have not been turn'd into Gall and Wormwood.

To look into her Armies, and see if there be no *Achans*, and *Sons of Belial* there.

To look into her Cathedrals, and see whether that Pompous Worship be according to Gospel Rule. To look into her Parochial Constitutions, and see whether *Wolves* and *Dumb Dogs* are not set to watch over the Flocks, and whether there be any thing of the *Godly Discipline of the Primitive Church restored* which was much wished for, when our Fathers first cast off the Iron Yoke of Popery.

Secondly, we should earnestly pray that the Lord would please by the Effusion and Conviction of his Spirit, to work a National Repentance among us, that as we have seen a change in the State, we may be so happy as to see a change of Heart and Life: *We be to us, if England be, the door which turneth upon his hinges,* Prov. 26. 14.

Lord God, give us a National Repentance like to that of Nineveh, *Jonah 3. 5, 10.* So the People of Nineveh believed God, and Proclaimed a Fast, and put on Sackcloth from

the greatest of them even to the least of them; and God saw their works, that they turned from their evil ways; and God Repented of the evil, that he said he would do unto them, and he did it not. Ninevehs Repentance was quick upon the first Sermon and Warning, ver. 4. at the motion of a Stranger, it was general King, Princes, Nobles High and Low, Rich and Poor, all in Sackcloth, nay the very Beasts, the Herds, the Flocks, were mourners too, it was serious and unfeigned, they cryed mightily unto God, [ver. 8.] and Reformed their Lives, it was upon a Peradventure, [ver. 9.] like to that in Joel 2. 14. *Who knoweth if he will return and Repent, and leave a Blessing behind him, even a meat Offering and a Drink Offering unto the Lord your God.* Such a Repentance, as this would help us, as it did them when they were within forty Days of Destruction.

God forbid, that the Men of Nineveh should rise up in Judgment against us of England, Matth. 12. 41.

1. Let us cry to the Lord on the behalf of the Court, that old Sins may not be found in our new Court, that the blemishes of King Charles the Second and King James the Second, may not be the stains of our King William the third and Queen Mary the second. That the Scepter in the Hand of our King may be a Scepter of Righteousness, that our Queen may be all Glorious within, that our Princes may be Israel, the Princes of God, that the meat of their Tables, the sitting of their Servants, the attendance of their Ministers, their Apparel, and their Cup-bearers may for the Beauty of Holiness, become the wonder of the world and the Joy of Angels, 1. Kings 10. 5.

2. Let's cry unto the Lord on the behalf of the Church, the Church of England, that the Godly worship and Discipline of the Primitive Church may be restored, that she may be cleansed refined, and Adorned, with meekness, that no Italian scents may be discerned in her worship. That no Leprous spot be seen upon her Children, Amos 5. 12. That all her Priests may be clothed with Righteousness, and all her Angels become Angels of Incense, that she may at length burn all her bloody Rods, and be deeply humbled for Josephs Bloody Coat, Gen. 37. 32. That so
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the Blessings of those, that have been ready to Perish may come upon her, and she may look as though she came down for Heaven, *as a Bride adorned for her Husband*, Rev. 21. 2.

3. Let us cry unto the Lord on the behalf of our Cities, that there may such a *stream of Righteousness* run down their streets as may Carry away all *false weights and measures*, Amos 5. 24. That there may be as much care to Spiritualize Trade as to Enlarge it, that our Citizens may be wise Merchants selling all to buy the *goodly Pearl*, of *Greatest price*, Matth. 13. 45. 46. That our Cities might by their Virtue, Justice and Holiness, acquire to themselves the new name in the Prophet, *Jehovah Shammah*, the Lord is there. Ezek. 48. 35.

4. Let's cry to the Lord on the behalf of the Camp, that our Officers and Soldiers may lay aside all Weapons of unrighteousness and do violence to no man; that they may not fight under the Banner of the Prince of Darkness nor carry the mark of the Beast in their Foreheads, nor in their Hands, that they may put on the whole Armour of God, and take to themselves the golden Shield of Faith, with the Sword of the Spirit, Ephes. 6. 16, 17. Triumphant victoriously over all the legions of Antichrist.

5. Let's cry to the Lord for the Country, that he would awaken the secure, and quicken every man to set his hand to the *right plow without looking back*, Luke 9. 62. to dress his own Vine and Fig-tree, that this whole Land may become the Garden of the Lord, that there may be no more plowing with an Ox and an Ass, or sowing our Fields with divers seeds, or wearing Garments of woollen and Linnen, or mingling a prophane life with profession of Godliness, Deut. 22. 10, 11.

6. Let's cry to the Lord on the behalf of the Papists, that he would please to call them out of Babylon, Revel. 18. 4. That they no longer worship the *golden Calves of Dan and Bethel*, that they may Renounce all subjection to the Man of Sin, and heartily submit to the holy Laws of the Son of God, who is wont to receive into the vineyard of his favour, all those, whatever they have been, that come to him at the *eleventh hour of the day*.

7. Let's

7. Let's cry unto the Lord on the behalf of the *Protestant Dissenters*, that for one tear, their Brethren drop for their own Sins or the *Sins of Zion*, they may drop ten, nay an hundred for one. That they may be *Exceeding humble*, under the Honour they have been called to in carrying the Cross of Christ, and in giving Testimony to the oppressed Truth of the Gospel. That they may be gentle, and quiet under all the Scorn and Indignation of the *Ishmaelites*. That they may constantly carry their enemies in the Arms of their Prayers before the Lord, Desiring him to forgive and bless them; that their profession may be Crown'd with perseverance, that their *Sackcloth* may be kept clean and unsullied that they may at length arive safely in that holy Land, where love hath the the Throne, and reigns for ever, there can be no greater happiness desired than to *stand eternally before the Throne, and before the Lamb, with white robes, and with palms in our Hands*, Rev. 7. 9.

Thirdly, having earnestly desired the Lord to give *England*, Repentance Let us with an equal fervour, Implore his pardoning Grace, let us all say with the Psalmist, *God be merciful to our Sin, for it is Great*, Psal. 25. 11. The grace of God teaches those that are in Covenant with him to draw Arguments for mercy as well from the greatness of their Sin, as from the greatness of their misery, knowing, that *where Sin abounds, Grace delights to abound much more*, Rom. 5. 20. But then because God is merciful to us, who are Sinful, we must not continue to be Sinful because he is merciful. *Englands Sin is great; God be merciful, and forgive it; when we deal with men we urge the smallness of an offence, as a motive to Forgiveness, but when we have to do with God 'tis otherwise, God be merciful to our Sin, for it is great; Englands Sin is great, it is exceeding Sinful. Light hath shined among us, but we love Darknes; Christ doth not Reign, his Government is refused: 'Tis often said in the Pulpits, and in the Prints, that the Church of England is the best Church in the world; O what a horrid thing is it then, if the People of England be the worst Livers, and the greatest Persecutors of their Brethren in the world! Whither must we go to find out greater Swearing Drinking, Whoreing under a brow of Brags than in these Kingdoms? Where such prodigious Pride, strange Apparel, general Prophaneness, Unthankfulness for the Gospel,*

pet, unfruitfulness under it; and which is to be Lamented with Tears of Blood; an unaccountable scoffing at all serious Holiness, as is to be found among our selves? O let's joyn most heartily in our humble Supplications now and at all times, that these Kingdoms may be washed all over in the Blood of the Covenant; that the destroying Angel may not break in upon us, which is the next thing to be spoken unto.

Fourthly, We should wrestle with the Lord, that he would please to Remove our Judgments, and prevent our Desolations *Jer. 17. 16. I desire not the woful day the Lord God knows, but if we turn not from our Idols, the woful day will come, I beseech you let's arise, and stand in the Gap, by Faith, and Prayer, and Holiness; had not Moses the Servant of the Lord stood in the Breach, the fury of the Lord had broke in like a flood upon the Tribes of Israel, Psal. 106. 23. with Exod. 32. 10. The Goodness of God had set up a Fence round about the Church in the Wilderness, but the golden Calf, which Aarons made, made a breach in that Fence, at which divine vengeance was rushing in, but Moses hastned, and stood in the breach, and saved Israel.*

We have some Arguments humbly to plead before our God.

1. These Kingdoms are Espoused to the Lord, and their Name was once *Hephzibah* and *Benja*, *Isa. 62. 4. The Lords delight, O Lord leave us not, we are called by thy Name.*

2. The Lord as we have heard loves not putting away, *Mal. 2. 16. but always Betrothes to himself a people in great faithfulness, he is always first in making Covenants of Love, but never first in departing from them, if he should give to our Mother libellum repudii, a Bill of Divorce, Isa. 5. 1. we should find it written there that our Mother had first play'd the Harlot with many Lovers.*

3. We have a gracious Promise, That if a wicked Backsliding people repent and return, they shall be received to favour, *Jer. 3. 1. They say if a Man put away his Wife, and she go from him and become another Mans, shall he return to her again, shall not that Land be greatly polluted? But thou hast play'd the Harlot with many Lovers, yet return again to me, saith the Lord. O let us tell the Lord upon our Knees this day, that now, even now we will return to him, and to give an assurance of it, England hath put on her Garments of Mourning.*

4. The

4. The Name of the Lord is concerned in *England's Mercy*, Deliverance, and Establishment, the Eye of all *Europe* is fixt upon us, and waits to see the Issue of our Affairs, whether *Christ* shall Triumph or *Antichrist*, *Michael* or the *Dragon*, whether the *Rod of Aaron* will swallow up the Rod of the *Magicians*, or the *Magicians Rod* devour the Rod of *Aaron*; and let us say as *Joshuah* did, *Lord, what wilt thou do unto thy great Name?* *Josh. 7. 9.*

5. We have had experience of the kindness of God to a worthless people, *he hath delivered and doth deliver in Scotland*, (*Glory to his Grace for our good News out of the North*) and we humbly hope he will deliver in *Ireland* and *England* too, *2 Cor. 1. 10.* He who saved us from *Paganism* of old, from *Antichristianism* of late, is able to save us from our selves; to Heal our Divisions, to Remove our Offences, to Unite our Hearts, and to set up the Government and Kingdom of *Christ* in *Glory* among us.

I shall now conclude with this only Motive to excite us to this Duty of Prayer, upon which we have been discoursing, *They who pray for the peace of Jerusalem shall prosper, Psal. 122. 6. Tranquilli, felices, sine cruce*, as he that can forgive a Brother will find God forgiving him, so he that can pray for the Prosperity of Church and State, will find peace springing up in his Soul, *they shall prosper that love thee*, they shall have marks of Mercy put upon them, when the destroying Angels walk about the Streets with slaughter Weapons in their Hands, *Ezek. 9. 2, 4.* in comparing this with that, *Exod. 12. 7.* I have only this to observe, that mark of mercy in *Exodus* was put upon the Door-posts, to shew that God would then save by Families; but in *Ezekiel* 'tis put on the Forehead, that we may learn from thence, that the Lord now in an evil day undertakes only for the safety of single Persons. My Brethren, let me prevail with you in this thing; go home, *sow in tears*, you shall reap in joy: Be found among the Mourners, and not among the Sinners in *Zion*, so shall we be Prosperous here and Glorious hereafter. Amen, Amen.

F I N I S.

